

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A surgical probe comprising a handle and a shaft which is connected to the handle (14) and has two axially mutually spaced electrodes, of which an electrode nearer the handle forms a proximal electrode and the other electrode which is far from the handle forms a distal electrode, wherein the electrodes respectively form an outside surface of the shaft and are separated from each other by an insulator wherein the outside diameter of the two electrodes and the outside diameter of the insulator are approximately equal and wherein the shaft has a fluid passage for a cooling fluid, which extends in the interior of the shaft from the handle into the distal electrode,

characterised in that the shaft has a distally closed hollow body that is electrically conductive and that ~~which~~ is connected to the handle and forms the distal electrode, carries the insulator as well as the proximal electrode and an insulating layer which is arranged in the radial direction between the hollow body and the proximal electrode; and further characterized in that the probe possesses a mechanical strength that permits insertion of the shaft into body tissue.

2. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that the insulating layer is arranged both between the hollow body and the proximal electrode and also between the hollow body and the insulator.

3. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that the insulating layer is formed by shrink tube.

4. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that the proximal electrode is formed by a metal tube of a diameter which is substantially equal over its length and of substantially equal wall thickness.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 5 characterised in that the fluid passage extends in the hollow body to the closed end thereof and is of a diameter which is substantially equal throughout.

7. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that the hollow body is shaped to a point at its distal end.

8. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that in the region of the distal electrode the hollow body is of an outside diameter which is approximately equal to the outside diameter of the proximal electrode or of the insulator.

9. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that the hollow body is of a smaller diameter in the region of the insulator and the distal electrode than in the region of the proximal electrode.

10. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised by a hose in the interior of the fluid passage with a mouth opening in the proximity of the closed distal end of the fluid passage, which hose is so arranged and

connected that a cooling fluid is to be passed through the hose into the proximity of the distal end of the fluid passage , there issues from the mouth opening of the hose and can flow back between the hose and the wall of the fluid passage to the proximal end of the shaft.

11. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 1 characterised in that at its proximal end the shaft is connected to the handle and is there partially embedded in sealing material in such a way that the tube forming the proximal electrode is completely embedded at its proximal end in the sealing material while the proximal end of the hollow body projects from the sealing material .

12. (Currently amended) A surgical probe as set forth in claim 11 characterised in that the proximal electrode is electrically contacted within the sealing material .